

U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary Bridget Brink's
Remarks after June 23-24 Trip to Azerbaijan

I am really pleased to be back in Azerbaijan. During this visit, I have had the chance to meet the President, Foreign Minister, opposition groups, and recently released political prisoners.

My goal has been to institutionalize the deepening cooperation with Azerbaijan across the three aspects of our relationship: security, economy and energy, and democracy and human rights. I used my meetings here to discuss ways to achieve this goal.

Azerbaijan is an important partner to the United States. Our security cooperation is a critical component of our relationship. We will continue to work together to counter terrorism and transnational threats. Our longstanding energy cooperation continues, and I was pleased to visit the Sangachal Terminal – a symbol of our 22-year energy partnership.

We are exploring areas of increased economic cooperation. I was glad to hear from the Presidents' economic advisor that he is talking to American businesses and incorporating their views to improve the business environment. This will foster increased foreign investment.

We welcome the release of journalists, activists, and others working for the future of Azerbaijan. I met with some of these individuals and believe that Azerbaijan's success and stability depends upon a multiplicity of voices within the society.

We discussed the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and the need for the sides to move forward on commitments made in Vienna and St. Petersburg. The U.S. remains committed to working with the sides to mediate a comprehensive settlement.

Again, thank you for the warm hospitality, and I am happy to take a few questions.